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Spatial Data Serving People: Land Governance and the Environment – Building the Capacity

Keynote address and Opening of the Conference

**Stig ENEMARK, Denmark
FIG President**

Honorable Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment Mr. Pham Khoi Nguyen, President of VGCR the Viet Nam Association of Geodesy, Cartography and Remote Sensing Dr. Dang Hung Vo, FIG Honorary President Holger Magel, Distinguished Guests, Dear Colleagues and Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of FIG, the International Federation of Surveyors, I welcome you all to our 7th FIG Regional Conference that for the second time is being held in South East Asia. First time was in Jakarta, October 2004, and now here in Hanoi, Vietnam five years later in October 2009.

The FIG regional conferences are designed to bring FIG to various regions in the world especially developing countries, to focus on the key professional issues. The regional conferences this way provide a unique opportunity to address issues at the top of the regional and local agenda.

The theme of the conference is “Spatial Data Serving People” focusing on Land Governance and the Environment - Building the Capacity. The theme and subjects are carefully chosen to address some of the key professional issues in South East Asia and especially our host country of Vietnam.

FIG has worked closely with the host association VGCR. I was here in July last year to prepare for this conference, and I was very impressed with your organization. It has been a great pleasure to work with you to organize this regional conference in Hanoi in for the South East Asia. A very special thank to President Vo and also to Secretary General Trinh Anh Co for your tireless efforts of making this conference a success.

As you are all aware, the Regional Consultation Meeting on the “FAO Voluntary Guidelines for responsible governance of tenure of land and other natural resources” is held as an integrated part of this FIG Regional Conference. A very special thank to Mr. Vo Ngoc Tien, the Assistant FAO representative in Vietnam and to Dr. Paul Munro-Faure, Chief of the FAO Land Tenure and Management Unit for using this opportunity to further progress the well established partnership between FIG and FAO. Also thanks to Dr. Mohamed El Sioufi, Head of the UN-HABITAT Shelter Branch for being here and supporting this event in cooperation with FAO. The continually evolving partnership between FIG and the UN agencies such as FAO and UN-HABITAT, and also the World Bank is a key driver in the FIG policies of contributing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

I am excited about welcoming you all to this co-operative event and I urge you to take advantage of the opportunities in the programme that include joint plenary sessions, parallel technical sessions and joint social events – a great opportunity for professional progress as well as networking and enjoyment.

With more than 350 participants from more than 50 countries throughout the world I feel convinced that the conference will give an important and clear signal to politicians and decision makers, about the standing of the surveying profession in this region and the importance of the key issues we are dealing with. A special thanks to the Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment Pham Khoi Nguyen for your support of this conference and for honoring our profession by addressing us here to day.

Vietnam is an exciting country in many ways. It is country with a strong culture and long – and sometimes difficult – history. The big change in mid 1980s with the so-called Doi Moi that is the renovation reform towards a more market oriented economy has allowed Vietnam to become one of the fastest growing economies in the world while still protecting its unique culture and history. But other challenges have emerged such as climate change where Vietnam is considered as one of the most vulnerable developing countries in the world - especially due to a long coastline of more than 3,000 kilometres and two huge river deltas of the Red River in the North and Mekong River in the South. This is addressed in more details in the FIG paper of the month for October and will be further discussed during the conference. Well designed land administration systems and National spatial data infrastructures are key tools in addressing the climate change challenge.

Vietnam is a country with a lot to offer – but at the same time you are struggling with a range of professional and land related problems. This led to the identification of three key themes of the conference, namely:

- Land Administration
- SDI and the Environment
- Capacity Building

Let me you quickly comment on each of them.

Firstly about Land Administration. All countries have to deal with the management of land. They have to deal with the four functions of land tenure, land value, land use, and land development in some way or another. Therefore, the design and building of appropriate land administration systems is a big issue in most developing countries. Vietnam and many other countries in the South East Asian Region are currently working on projects to get these systems in place. I am very happy that we will have the opportunity during this conference to get an overview of what is going on in the region. In this regard I am happy to welcome my good friend and colleague Mr. Keith Bell from the World Bank being responsible for the East Asia Pacific Region to present and discuss this overall picture. This will come up at the plenary following this opening session where we will also have a special focus on the situation in Vietnam that will be further developed in the technical session during the afternoon.

As an outcome or legacy of this regional conference in Hanoi we intend to develop a publication in line with previous publications in the FIG series. This will focus on Land Acquisition in Emerging Economies, which is identified as the key professional issue in the region and there is a need for comprehensive guidelines to conduct these processes. Again we have an expert from the FIG officers in charge namely professor Kauko Viitanen Chair of FIG Commission 9 (Valuation and the Management of Real Estate) to develop this publication.

In March this year we had a Joint FIG and World Bank Conference on Land Governance in Support of the Millennium Development Goals. The proceedings from the conference are available at the FIG website and a publication is currently being developed on this theme to be launched at the FIG congress in Sydney in April next year. This conference here in Hanoi should also promote the role of the surveyors in terms of contributing to achieving the Millennium Development Goals with a specific regional focus.

Dear Colleagues, we should all recognize the statement that I have repeated a few times by now saying that “No development will occur without having a spatial dimension and no development will happen without the footprint of the surveying profession – the land professionals”. This relates to positioning and mapping and to databases on the natural and built environment. Development also requires secure tenure systems and adequate systems for land valuation, land-use management and land development. And as a basic rule these systems must be transparent and relate to good governance as is the theme of the FAO Consultation Meeting.

Our **second** theme for the conference is about **SDI and the Environment**. Over the recent decades Vietnam and other countries in the region have gone through a process towards technological modernization with a complete transform from analog to digital generation in surveying and mapping technology. The current NSDI of Viet Nam is designed to effectively serve the control of natural resources exploitation, the environment protection and the forecast of natural disasters and consequences of climate changes. And it plays a pivotal role in bridging the information gap between the Government and its citizen by pushing for administrative reform and protecting people's rights and the benefits of sustainable use of land resources.

These issues are well addressed in the programme on Tuesday. It is, however, also important to stress and understand the fundamental role of the global positioning systems as a basis for building modern spatial data infrastructures and sustainable land administration systems. It can be argued that GNSS could be considered one of the only true global infrastructures in that the base level of quality and accessibility is constant across the globe.

I am happy to see that this issue is well covered in the conference programme with a strong commitment from Commission 5 and focusing on the reference frame in Asia and the Pacific region. I would also like to welcome Prof. Chris Rizos, President Elect of the International Association of Geodesy who will give a keynote on this topic in the plenary session on Tuesday morning.

Let me now move to the **third theme** this week that is about **building the capacity** for the surveying profession and especially building the capacity in the areas of Land Administration and SDI. This relates to both institutional development and the more conventional focus on education, training and human resource development.

Building of professional competence requires a broadly based educational programme, based on research and interacting with professional practice. This will provide broadly based specialist as land professionals in the various fields of surveying. Professional competence is then established through practice and maintained and enhanced through lifelong learning activities. Professional associations have a key role to play in terms of providing a home base for professional development including CPD and Life Long Learning activities and appropriate Code of Ethics. Land Professionals do not only serve the clients but also contribute to building a sustainable society.

These issues will be addressed in the third plenary of this conference which is on Wednesday and I am happy to welcome Honorary President of FIG Professor Holger Magel to give a key note in this session. The issue will then further be explored during technical sessions.

Let me finally convey sincere thanks especially to our platinum sponsor Trimble and to other sponsors and exhibitors. Your contribution and participation is highly appreciated and of great value to the conference.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude by wishing you all an enjoyable conference and don't forget to take your time to enjoy this beautiful country – Vietnam has so much to offer.

I therefore have great pleasure in declaring the 7th FIG Regional Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam opened.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Stig Enemark is President of the International Federation of Surveyors, FIG 2007-2010. He is Professor in Land Management and Problem Based Learning at Aalborg University, Denmark, where he was Head of School of Surveying and Planning 1991-2005. He is a well known international expert in the areas of land administration systems, land management and spatial planning, and related educational and capacity building issues.

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